

Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach Grant Program



What is the FOTO Grants Program?

The new Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach (FOTO) program was established in the Agricultural Act of 2018 to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers (SDVFRs) and beginning farmers and ranchers (BFRs) in the ownership and operation of farms and ranches through education and training; and promote equitable participation in the agricultural programs of USDA.

FOTO is the combination of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) and the Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program (2501 Program). USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) administers BFRDP and USDA's Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) manages the 2501 Program.

FOTO provides mandatory funding of \$30 million for fiscal year (FY) 2020 and increases funding annually up to \$50 million by FY2023. Annual funding will be split equally between BFRDP and the 2501 Program.

For more information on the BFRDP, visit:
<https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp>

What groups are defined as socially disadvantaged under the 2501 Program?

A socially disadvantaged group is defined as: A farmer or rancher who is a member of one or more of the following groups whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities:

- African Americans
- American Indians
- Alaskan Natives
- Asians
- Hispanics
- Pacific Islanders

What is the definition of a veteran under the 2501 Program?

A veteran farmer or rancher (VFR) is a person who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable and who also meets the definition of beginning farmer or rancher. The VFR must: a) not have operated a farm or ranch; or b) not have operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 consecutive years. For a legal entity or joint operation to be considered a VFR entity, all members must meet the definition of VFR.

What are the priority areas for the 2501 Program?

- Assist socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers in owning and operating successful farms and ranches;
- Improve participation among socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers in USDA programs;
- Build relationships between current and prospective farmers and ranchers who are socially disadvantaged or veterans and USDA's local, state, regional, and National offices;
- Introduce agriculture-related information to socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers through innovative training and technical assistance techniques; and
- Introduce agricultural education targeting youth and beginning socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers in rural and persistent poverty communities.

Who is eligible to receive a 2501 Program grant?

- Community-Based & Non-Profit Organizations
- Tribal Governments & Colleges
- Higher Education Institutions with Agricultural Programs (such as 1890s, 1994s and Hispanic-Serving Institutions)
- Alaskan Native Cooperative Colleges

Organizations must have documented experience in working with socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers for at least three (3) years to qualify for the 2501 Program.

For more information:

Visit our website
<https://www.usda.gov/partnerships/socially-disadvantaged-farmers-and-ranchers>

Visit Grants.gov
<https://grants.gov>

Email or call us
2501grants@usda.gov or (202) 720-6350